In The WorkRoom

THE WORKROOM Spring Equinox 1996 Vol. 1, No. 1

Eostar:

Celebrating the Spring Equinox

Eostar is named after the Teutonic Goddess, Eostre, who also gave her name to another spring celebration: Easter. This festival was integrated into the Celtic calendar after contact with Mediterranean people, as were the solstices and the fall equinox. Spring equinox is one of two times in the year when day and night are both equal, exactly twelve hours each. Its date changes from year to year, usually falling around March 19th to 21st. This year, Eostar is on March 20th.

Eostar is a time of beginnings. The warm weather of spring is returning, and new life is beginning to pop up everywhere. The winter snow is melting, the trees are beginning to bud, the air is full of the green and brown smells of grass and soil - and of the warm promise of summer's bounty, just around the corner. Persephone, whom we call Kore, the Maiden, returns from the Underworld and Demeter awakens new life everywhere in celebration of their reunion. The long, dark nights are over for another year. This is a time to make plans and to do the spring cleaning that makes way in our lives for new projects. It is a time to dream, a time of inspiration. As we stand between the new year and the old, we feel the crisis of action, that profound urge to move forward, to do something, anything. And yet we are still close to last winter's events, to its lessons and to the things we worked hard to accomplish - some with success, some without. We must find a balance between the two cycles somehow so that we can build on the lessons we've learned, and yet still somehow move forward into a new year of fresh challenges.

The symbols of Eostar have become part of the secular traditions attached to Easter. Both eggs and "bunnies" are obvious symbols of fertility. Dying eggs is a very old tradition with roots in the British Isles. Long ago, the eggs were dyed red with the blossoms of furze to represent the return of life and warmth and sunshine. The eggs turned bright red, a colour of life's blood flowing in the earth and of the sun returning after the long winter months. Coloured eggs are a nice addition to an altar, especially alongside the flowers of spring: hyacinth, daffodils, lilies and tulips, all in a rainbow of colours, bright and pastel.

Upcoming Workshops

March

18th & 27th: Paganism 101
1:15 - 2PM, Room H-619
Open forum discussion
Topics this month: Pagan/magickal ethics; ritual design

18th: Eostar Craft
8:30 - 10:30PM, Loyola campus
Creating hand-stitched heirlooms for springtime
$7 material fee
Please register in advance

22nd: Astrology
8:30 - 10:30PM, Room AD-510
Part III of the Art of Divination series
Free natal chart! Register early!

April

10th: Paganism 101
1:15 - 2PM, Room H-619
Open forum discussion
Topic: The role of Pagan clergy

26th: Magick in Wood II
8:30 - 10:30PM, the WorkRoom
Learn the significance of trees in Pagan tradition
Carve or paint your own set of runes!
$15 material fee
Please register in advance

What is the WorkRoom?

The WorkRoom is Willow and Ironwood, two Pagans who want to preserve the "craft" in Witchcraft. We make a number of items, from cross stitched dream pillows to wooden ritual tools, and we offer workshops on the various techniques used in their production. We also teach arts such as divination and herbcraft, which no Pagan should be without. Join us for a workshop, browse through our collection of unique items, or request a craft made to your specifications. We're here to serve you in any way we can, so don't be shy!

The WorkRoom Logo:
Handmade with Love

Herb Notes

February 16th marked the beginning of a whole new series of workshops dedicated to the study of herbs. First in the series was the winter instalment of Herbs that Heal, a course which introduces the healing properties of herbs found in the average spice cabinet. A complete set of notes for the workshop, Grandmother's Secret Remedies for Winter's Ails, has been printed and bound; extra copies are still available through the Concordia University Pagan Society. the suggested donation is $5 and all proceeds go to CUPS.

Upcoming workshops in the series will include an introduction to growing herbs, in which students will plant their own herb garden in a container to take home. There will also be an herb walk in one of the city's public parks where herbs growing wild will be identified and discussed.

In addition to our herbal workshops, the WorkRoom can provide you with a number of herbal products, from dream pillows and ointments made with a base of pure almond oil and beeswax, to herb seeds and live plants by custom order. We can help you find herbs for medicinal or culinary use, as well as those grown for their perfumes and dyes, for dried flower arrangements, and many other special uses.

Bough Down

Basswood
(*Tiliaceae* family)

Basswood is a lightweight hardwood obtained from North American linden trees. It is rather soft and weak compared to other woods, and has a low resistance to shock and decay. Although it is used in cabinetmaking, most basswood is made into lumber, especially for the construction of crates and boxes. It is also the source of pulp for paper production, and of fiber used to make cord, mats, fishnet and other items.

Trees in the Linden family have alternate, asymmetrical leaves and small greenish flowers having five petals, and usually a noticeable scent. There are over 725 species in the family, about 45 of which fall within the Linden genus. The American basswood, *Tilia americana*, grows to a height of roughly 30 metres and yields a straight-grained wood which varies from creamy white or brown to reddish in colour. A tea from its inner bark has been used for lung ailments and digestive problems, and tea made from the leaves and flowers was used to treat nervous headaches, restlessness and digestive disorders. A tisane made from the European linden, or lime tree, is readily available in grocery stores and pharmacies.

Magickally, the European linden is associated with protection, luck and love. Branches of linden can be hung over your door for protection, or carry linden bark to prevent intoxication. Linden leaves and flowers can be mixed with equal parts of lavender to make a dream pillow to relieve insomnia. They are also used in love spells, and the leaves are used for immortality. Charms carved from linden wood are carried for good luck.

Getting in Touch

You can reach Willow and Ironwood at the WorkRoom. Call us at 769-7853, before 9PM daily.

Kitchen Witchery

Question:
What is a Kitchen Witch?

Answer:
Anyone who would rather spend time puttering around in the garden or stirring a pot on the stove than memorizing some arcane invisibility spell! Kitchen Witches are those whose favourite brew is usually tea, whose magick wands are wooden spoons, and whose cauldrons are more often than not overflowing with home-made soup. Kitchen Witches are cooks and crafters, gardeners and grandmothers, and we fill our lives with the magick of things we make and grow with our very own hands. Our athames are paring knives and scissors, our books of shadows are full of recipes, and our homes are filled with all sorts of old-fashioned treats, made with love.

If you are a Kitchen Witch, watch this space in the coming months. We'll be printing tips for everything from canning to composting and from quilting to candle making. There will be lots of interesting ways for you to save time, energy and money, and to make your home-made projects into real treasures.

In the Works

The WorkRoom is preparing for another busy summer, folks! The MiniBus will be on the road again this August taking passengers, including the CUPS entourage, to MacDonalds Corners for a relaxing weekend in nature. We'll be offering workshops at the CUPS campsite, and vending our handmade crafts. Our summer courses are in the works, too. Watch for workshops on Pagan justice and ritual design, as well as our new herb workshops!